

I Claim:

1. A bear-resistant pannier comprising:

a pannier having an open top and having a bottom wall and four upright and joined sidewalls;

a cover means, having a thickness, for covering the open top of the pannier;

hinge means for hingedly mounting the cover means to a sidewall of the pannier;

the cover means movable from a closed position to an open position;

the four sidewalls having an interiorly extending lip positioned in spaced apart relation with the open top a distance corresponding to the thickness of the cover;

the cover means provided with an opening adjacent an edge of the cover opposite the hinge means;

a latch means mounted to the cover means and extending through the opening for selectively securing the cover means adjacent the lip of the sidewalls when the cover means is in the closed position;

the latch means comprising:

a mounting plate;

means for mounting the mounting plate to an outside surface of the cover means;

a squared "U"-shaped housing having a first and second opposed legs joined together by a bottom member;

free ends of the legs are joined to an underside of the mounting plate;

a first post secured to an edge of the first leg and extending in an interior direction away from the mounting plate for a distance beyond the bottom member;

a stop post secured to the second leg on the same side of the housing as the first post and extending in an interior direction away from the mounting plate to a distance beyond the bottom member;

a second post secured to an edge of the second leg on the opposite side of the housing as the stop post and extending in an interior direction away from the mounting plate to a distance beyond the bottom member;

the first and second posts having an identical length and the stop post having a length shorter than the first and second posts;

a rod having a length greater than the distance between the mounting plate and the bottom member;

the mounting plate having an opening extending into the space defined by the housing and sized to slidably receive the rod;

the rod positioned to extend through the hole in the mounting plate into the space defined by the housing;

a handle mounted to the rod at an end extending away from the mounting plate on a side opposite the housing;

the bottom member of the housing provided with a hole aligned with the hole in the mounting plate and sized to slidably receive the rod;

the rod positioned to extend through the hole in the bottom member and beyond the bottom member;

an elongate latch plate having one end affixed, in cantilever fashion, to an end of the rod extending beyond the bottom member;

the latch plate having a length greater than the distance of the rod to the interiorly extending lip of the pannier and rotatable from a latched position where a distal end of the latch plate extends below the lip of the pannier to an unlatched position where the distal end of the latch plate is free from the lip of the pannier;

a washer affixed to the rod between the mounting plate and the bottom member; and

a coil compression spring positioned on the rod between the washer and the bottom member;

the coil spring being partially compressed between the washer and the bottom spring member to resiliently bias the latch plate against the bottom member;

the handle operable to urge the rod against the bias force of the coil spring to move the latch plate beyond the free end of the stop post;

the handle further operable to rotate the latch plate to a position where the latch plate may nest either between the first

post and the stop post or between the second post and the stop post.

2. The pannier according to claim 1 wherein the bottom wall, four upright sidewalls and cover means are constructed of metal.

3. The pannier according to claim 1 wherein a pair of mounting brackets are mounted to an exterior surface of the bottom wall for use in strapping the pannier to a horse.

4. The pannier according to claim 1 wherein a shelf is mounted within the interior of the pannier.

5. A latch for latching a cover to an interiorly extending latching lip of an open top pannier comprising:

a mounting plate;

means for mounting the mounting plate to an outside surface of the cover adjacent the latching lip of the pannier;

a squared "U"-shaped housing having a first and second opposed legs joined together by a bottom member;

free ends of the legs are joined to an underside of the mounting plate;

a first post secured to an edge of the first leg and extending in an interior direction away from the mounting plate for a distance beyond the bottom member;

a stop post secured to the second leg on the same side of the housing as the first post and extending in an interior direction away from the mounting plate to a distance beyond the bottom member;

a second post secured to an edge of the second leg on the opposite side of the housing as the stop post and extending in an interior direction away from the mounting plate to a distance beyond the bottom member;

the first and second posts having an identical length and the stop post having a length shorter than the first and second posts;

a rod having a length greater than the distance between the mounting plate and the bottom member;

the mounting plate having an opening extending into the space defined by the housing and sized to slidably receive the rod;

the rod positioned to extend through the hole in the mounting plate into the space defined by the housing;

a handle mounted to the rod at an end extending away from the mounting plate on a side opposite the housing;

the bottom member of the housing provided with a hole aligned with the hole in the mounting plate and sized to slidably receive the rod;

the rod positioned to extend through the hole in the bottom member and beyond the bottom member;

an elongate latch plate having one end affixed, in cantilever fashion, to an end of the rod extending beyond the bottom member;

the latch plate having a length greater than the distance of the rod to the latching lip of the pannier and rotatable from a latched position where a distal end of the latch plate extends below the latching lip of the pannier to an unlatched position where the distal end of the latch plate is free from the latching lip of the pannier;

a washer affixed to the rod between the mounting plate and the bottom member; and

a coil compression spring positioned on the rod between the washer and the bottom member;

the coil spring being partially compressed between the washer and the bottom spring member to resiliently bias the latch plate against the bottom member;

the handle operable to urge the rod against the bias force of the coil spring to move the latch plate beyond the free end of the stop post;

the handle further operable to rotate the latch plate to a position where the latch plate may nest either between the first post and the stop post or between the second post and the stop post.